

Chino Hills State Park



Our Mission

The mission of the California Department of Parks and Recreation is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.

GRAY DAVIS
Governor

MARY D. NICHOLS
Secretary for Resources

RUTH COLEMAN
Acting Director, California State Parks



California State Parks does not discriminate against individuals with disabilities. Prior to arrival, visitors with disabilities who need assistance should contact the park at the phone number below. To receive this publication in an alternate format, write to the Communications Office at the following address.

**CALIFORNIA
STATE PARKS**
P.O. Box 942896
Sacramento, CA
94296-0001

For information call:
800-777-0369
916-653-6995, outside the U.S.
711, TTY Relay Service

Chino Hills State Park
1879 Jackson Street
Riverside, CA 92504
(909) 780-6222



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Chino Hills State Park, a premier natural open-space area in the hills of Santa Ana Canyon near Riverside, is a critical link in the Puente-Chino Hills biological corridor. Its 12,452 acres encompass stands of oaks, sycamores and rolling, grassy hills that stretch nearly 31 miles, from the Santa Ana Mountains to the Whittier Hills. Chino Hills State Park is vitally important as a refuge to many species of plants and as a link between natural areas essential to the survival of many animal species.

The park is also a place where people can escape the pressures of urban life and find peace and solitude in a natural setting. Visitors can camp for a few days or simply enjoy walking, horseback riding or bicycling over trails that meander along ridge tops and through valleys, woodlands, sage scrub and grasslands. Sixty miles of trails and fire roads also offer excellent opportunities for viewing wildlife and native plants. Facilities



consist of a picnic area, an equestrian staging area, pipe corrals, water spigots and restrooms. Most of the trails accept multiple use. However, a few trails are designated for hiking only, because of safety issues or the potential for damage to the habitat.

PARK HISTORY

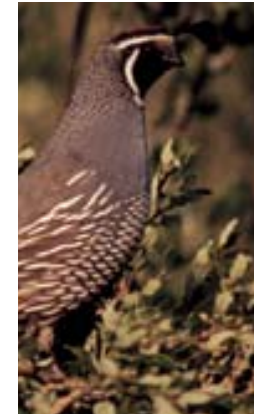
Over the centuries many people have made use of the open spaces and plentiful water, plant and animal resources of the Chino Hills. Prior to European contact, the Gabrielino Indians, who lived along the Santa Ana River basin, set up temporary camps for gathering acorns, elderberries, walnuts and other seeds.

After the Spanish founded Mission San Gabriel in 1771, the Chino Hills were used extensively for grazing by mission cattle. During the Mexican Republic era, the hills were used as spillover grazing from such surrounding Mexican ranchos as Santa Ana del Chino and La Sierra Yorba. After Mexico ceded California to the United States in 1848, the land was still used primarily for grazing.

In 1848 the 1,720-acre Rolling M Ranch was established, and the land was leased to nearby landowners for cattle grazing. Private land acquisition began in the 1870s and continued into the 1890s. Some late nineteenth and early twentieth century oil exploration and mining activity also took place in the northwestern section of what is now the park. A ranch house, historic barn, and several windmills and watering troughs serve as reminders of the cattle ranching days.

In 1977 the California legislature passed a resolution directing California State Parks to conduct a study on acquiring Chino Hills land for park purposes. A local citizen group, Hills for Everyone, worked closely with California State Parks and the legislature to create the park with an initial

acquisition of 2,237 acres. In 1984 the State Park and Recreation Commission officially declared the area a unit of the State Park System. Since that date numerous land acquisitions from various private landowners have expanded the park to its present acreage.



California quail

BUILDING THE CHINO HILLS BIO-LINK

For humans relaxing or recreating in the park, Chino Hills State Park is an island of tranquillity in a sea of urbanization. For the plants and animals in the park, it is a link to other natural areas. Southern California is so heavily urbanized that it is impossible to preserve the huge tracts of land needed to ensure species diversity. However, by providing a major biological link between islands of open space, Chino Hills State Park effectively makes habitats larger.

Water Canyon Natural Preserve and Coal Canyon make up a biological corridor

that allows wide-ranging species like bobcats, mountain lions and a variety of rare species to avoid becoming trapped in isolated patches of habitat. When small patches of wilderness are cut off from other open space areas, many of the species present at the time of isolation will inevitably disappear. Biological corridors help to maintain healthy populations of plants and animals by allowing for genetic exchange, species migration, and repopulation after a catastrophe such as a fire.

WILDLIFE

Because of its great variety of habitats and microclimates, Chino Hills State Park is an ideal location for observing many wildlife species native to southern

California. Red-tailed hawks and turkey vultures soar above. Coyotes, deer, bobcats and other mammals are often seen in the woodlands, scrub and grasslands. Visitors with good ears and sharp eyes will enjoy the many songbird species seen and heard foraging and raising young in the trees and shrubs.

More than 200 species of birds and mammals, numerous reptiles and amphibians, and thousands of types of insects and other invertebrates live in the park. Some of these animals, including least bell's vireo, the

California gnatcatcher and the coastal cactus wren, are considered rare, threatened or endangered. The local diversity of native plants and animals found here in the Southern California basin is greater than in any other area of comparable size in the United States.

GEOGRAPHY

Ranging from 430 feet to 1,781 feet in elevation, the park straddles the north end of the Santa Ana Mountains and the southeast portion of the Puente-Chino Hills, which

together form the northern end of the Peninsular Ranges in Southern California. This formation interrupts the generally flat Los Angeles Basin with a variety of rolling hills, mountains and canyons on its south and east sides. The hills are a result of uplift and folding along the Whittier and Chino faults.

The Puente-Chino Hills are made up of sedimentary rocks of the Puente

Formation deposited from five to fifteen million years ago. Associated with this formation are petroleum resources that have been explored and exploited in the Los Angeles region since the late 1800s. Fine clay soils

are found in these formations, as well as a few areas of alluvial deposits that wash down from the hills and mountains during winter rains.

PLANT COMMUNITIES

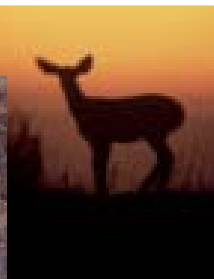
Diversity is perhaps the most important feature of the vegetation found within Chino Hills State Park. In fact, the park has several different kinds of vegetation in each of its major habitats.

In the park's creek zones, cattail stands provide habitat for a variety of wildlife, among them red-winged blackbirds. Along seasonal and year-round creeks, willow and sycamore woodlands have understories of wild rose, stinging nettle and mule fat. These riparian areas provide cover and food for numerous animals and nesting birds. Many of these nesting birds are migratory species that come to the streamside habitats from Central and South America each spring to raise their young. Southern California black walnut trees join coast live oaks to form

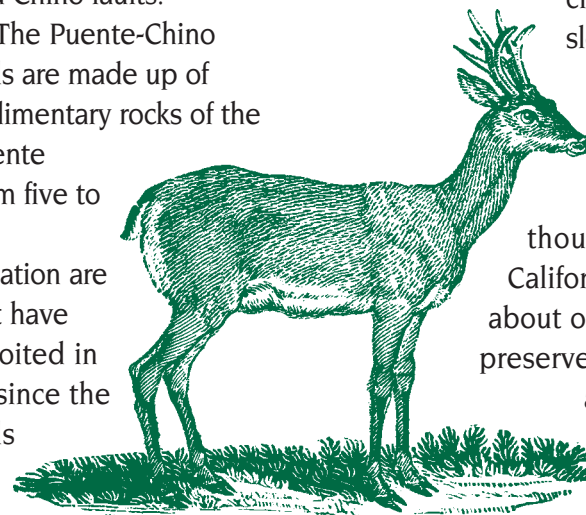
woodlands above the creeks, often on north facing slopes. These walnut woodlands are another important and rare plant community preserved in the park. Only a few thousand acres of this California habitat still exist, with about one thousand acres in preserves. Several hundred acres are protected at Chino Hills State Park.



Bobcat



California gnatcatcher





Telegraph Canyon

The Tecate cypress is another special type of plant community found only in a few places in the United States. Several Tecate cypresses are found in Coal Canyon, adjacent to the larger ecological reserve managed by the California Department of Fish and Game.

Several different scrub and chaparral communities along the hills and slopes above the canyon floors include coastal sage scrub, California sagebrush, California buckwheat and purple sage, as well as a mixed chaparral community dominated by laurel sumac and toyon. Many California wildlife species depend on these scrub and chaparral communities for survival. Because these communities are disappearing as urban development continues, they form an increasingly important part of the biological resources protected in the park.

Most of the grassland in the park is non-native annual European grasses that were introduced here during the early ranching years. However, grassland species native to California, such as purple needle grass and giant rye, can be found among the annuals.

An active grassland restoration program in the park is restoring native grassland to its more natural and dominant state.

PARK OPPORTUNITIES

Campfires, school programs, nature hikes, Junior Rangers and educational talks are offered throughout the year.

The Chino Hills Interpretive Association is a great asset, supporting volunteers who assist in nature walks, operation of the native plant nursery, and various natural resource projects. Bicycle and mounted assistance units help provide public safety and information as well as resource protection. Seasonal employment opportunities also exist. For more information please contact the park office.

NEARBY STATE PARKS

- California Citrus State Historic Park, 9400 Dufferin Avenue in Riverside (909) 780-6222
- Lake Perris State Recreation Area, 11 miles south of Riverside (909) 940-5603/5608



Chino Hills

PLEASE REMEMBER

Hours—8:00 a.m. to sunset.

Fees—Day-use and camping fees are collected.

Speed limit—15 mph for all vehicles and bicycles.

Vehicles off-road—Motor vehicles may not be driven off-road or in the back country.

Smoking—Because of the high fire danger, smoking is prohibited.

Campfires—Permitted only in designated fire rings; not permitted during fire season.

Trash—Pack it in, pack it out!

Weapons—Weapons of any kind are prohibited.

Trails—For safety's sake, stay on designated trails and don't hike alone. Be aware of wildlife, especially rattlesnakes.

Collecting—Animals, plants, rocks, dirt and artifacts are protected by law and may not be disturbed or collected.

Dogs—Dogs are welcome on Bane Canyon Road, McLean Overlook, the Rolling M Ranch and in the campgrounds. They must be on leash at all times and are not allowed in the backcountry or on trails. Pets must not be left alone at any time.

Park closure—The park will close for 48 hours following rain of more than one quarter inch. High clay content in the soil causes "greased" trails and roads. Use during this time makes hiking, bicycling and equestrian activities hazardous and causes severe rutting of trail and road surfaces. The park is also during times of extreme fire danger.